



Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs

Representative Peter Fischer, Chair
Human Services Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
February 20, 2023

Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP), I am sending this letter to support Representative Hanson's House File 1566 – administration and funding for 988 implementation.

The Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP) is the state's leading association for Community Mental Health Programs, representing 35 community-based mental health providers and agencies across the state. Our mission is to serve all who come to us seeking mental and chemical health services, regardless of their insurance status, ability to pay or where they live. As Essential Community Providers, we serve primarily culturally diverse, low-income, uninsured and public healthcare program insured Minnesotans, who cannot access services elsewhere. We serve our clients with comprehensive and coordinated care.

The majority of MACMHP member community mental health programs provide crisis call and mobile crisis response. They staff call centers as well as staff mobile crisis teams who are often the response to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis in the community. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline's new 3-digit number [launched last July](#). The new number is intended to be easy to remember, similar to how people can dial 911 for medical emergencies.

Crises are typically de-escalated on the call, with less than 2% of Lifeline calls engaging emergency services or mobile crisis response. However, it is critical that calls to 988 from Minnesotans be answered in our own state so that connections to local resources and mobile crisis response can be made as needed. We have worked hard and invested in building out our mobile crisis system in Minnesota, but a person who needs that level of response won't get it if their call is answered in another state.

A sustainable 988 and crisis response system are critical components to our mental health continuum for individuals' and communities' accessing mental health care. Challenges to accessing mental health care are compounded by COVID and now post. Providers are seeking all lifelines for a more durable solution that will allow them to prepare to deliver critical mental health support. 988 is a key component of our community mental health care system in Minnesota and across the U.S..

Please support increasing funding to the program and House File 1566. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely

Jin Lee Palen, Executive Director
Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs | MACMHP